

Applic. No. 10/785,123
Amdt. dated December 30, 2006
Reply to Office action of October 13, 2006

Remarks/Arguments:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-11 are now in the application. Claims 10 and 11 have been added. Support for claim 10 can be found in Figs. 3 and 4. Support for claim 11 can be found on page 9, line 26 to page 10, line 3. No new matter has been added.

In the second paragraph on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, claims 1-3 and 7 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by Eitel et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,133,543) (hereinafter "Eitel") under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

As will be explained below, it is believed that the claims were patentable over the cited art in their original form and the claims have, therefore, not been amended to overcome the references.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 1 calls for, *inter alia*:

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the feed table having suction openings and ventilation openings formed therein, ...and the ventilation openings in the feed table corresponding with the through openings in the suction belt.

The Eitel reference discloses that suction bore holes (2) and compensation bore holes (61 and 62) are formed in a conveyor table (1). The compensation bore holes (61 and 62) are disposed between conveyor belts (4). Eitel discloses openings (21-24) disposed in the bottom of the suction chambers (14 and 16). The openings (21-24) can be closed with slides (26 and 27) for controlling the negative pressure in the suction chambers (column 5, line 30 to column 6, line 7). Therefore, the openings are not ventilation openings, as recited in the claims of the instant application.

On page 2 of the Office action the Examiner alleges that Eitel discloses "the feed table having suction openings 2, and ventilation openings, 21 through 24, formed therein" and that "the ventilation openings correspond with the through openings of the belt." Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner. More specifically, Eitel discloses that the feed table has suction bore holes (2) and compensation bore holes (61 and 62) formed in the feed table. Eitel discloses that the openings (21-24) are formed in the bottom of the suction

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chambers (14 and 16). Eitel discloses that the openings (21-24) are provided for controlling the negative pressure in the suction chambers (14 and 16). Eitel does not disclose that the openings are ventilation openings which correspond to the conveyor belt openings (7). Therefore, it is respectfully noted that the Examiner's allegations with respect to the ventilation openings are not accurate.

The reference does not show the feed table having suction openings and ventilation openings formed therein, ...and the ventilation openings in the feed table corresponding with the through openings in the suction belt, as recited in claim 1 of the instant application. The Eitel reference discloses suction bore holes (2) and compensation bore holes (61 and 62) are formed in a conveyor table (1). The compensation bore holes (61 and 62) are disposed between the conveyor belts. Eitel discloses openings (21-24) formed in the bottom of the suction chambers (14 and 16). Eitel does not disclose ventilation openings formed in the conveyor table, which correspond to the conveyor belt openings. This is contrary to the invention of the instant application as claimed, in which the feed table has suction openings and ventilation openings formed therein, ...and the ventilation openings in the feed table correspond with the through openings in the suction belt.

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Since claim 1 is believed to be allowable, dependent claims 2, 3, and 7 are believed to be allowable as well.

It is appreciatively noted from the first paragraph on page 3 of the Office action that claims 4-6 and 8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The claims have not been amended as indicated by the Examiner, as the claims are believed to be patentable in their existing form.

It is appreciatively noted from the second paragraph on page 3 of the Office action that claim 9 is allowed.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 1. Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-8, 10, and 11 are solicited.

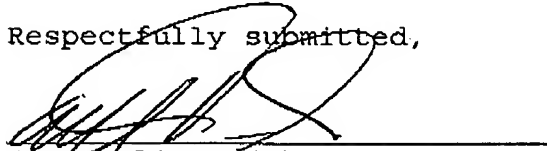
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In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel respectfully requests a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Please charge any other fees which might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner Greenberg Stemer LLP, No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,



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